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Public Comments on Rates for Interstate Inmate Calling Services:=====

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Comment: I am writing in support of Commission regulation of ICS to lessen the costs of—therefore increasing access to—telephone communication between prison inmates and their friends and loved ones. I am a second year law student at Stanford Law School and I have focused my studies on criminal law and criminal justice reform. Beyond my ordinary coursework, I also serve as a researcher with the Stanford Criminal Justice Center. In providing this comment I also represent fellow student members of the Executive Board of the Stanford Criminal Law Society. We support regulation of prison calling services area both in the interest of fairness and public safety.

Service provider commissions to facilities are of particular concern because they mean that contract awards may be based on something other than the quality and cost effectiveness of prison calling services. To demonstrate that facility commissions—rather than direct calling service costs

alone—drive call rates up, compare the rates at facilities that allow commissions and the much lower rates in states that have banned commissions. The complete abolition of facility commissions could prove an important first step in regulation by eliminating a major external cost from inmate calling rates.

Increased contact with friends and family can improve outcomes in terms of reducing recidivism and improving prisoner prospects for reentry. This has an obvious benefit to prisoners and their families, but their benefit also radiates out to their communities in the form of increased public safety and security. As someone who plans to work in criminal justice, it is encouraging to me that very often the more humane solutions to crime are also the most effective for reducing recidivism. Facilitating more contact between inmates and their friends and family on the outside is no different. Both intuition and research tell us that more contact with loved ones can bolster prisoner reentry and prevent future crime. (cites in pdfdoc)

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